

# **Navigation Safety Subcommittee #1**

## **Subcommittee Report – October 7, 2009**

### **Proposed Western Traffic Lanes**

The Navigation Safety Subcommittee has convened two special meetings over the summer in response to traffic concerns raised by the San Pedro Vessel Traffic Service. Specifically increased traffic congestion has been observed in the area south of the Santa Barbara Channel Islands. The meeting minutes are included in today's materials.

At those meetings, the Vessel Traffic Service briefed the subcommittee on their traffic concerns. Extensive discussion on that issue continued through two subcommittee meetings. We had very good representation from all sectors, including CA state agencies, the US Navy, the US Coast Guard, and local stakeholders.

The subcommittee concluded that *increased traffic congestion in the waters south of the Santa Barbara Channel Islands, an area without a formalized routing system, increased the risk of collision in that area and raised navigation safety concerns sufficiently to warrant action by the LALB Harbor Safety Committee.*

As a result, the subcommittee recommended that the LALB Harbor Safety Committee should establish a voluntary western precautionary area, and a voluntary eastbound and westbound traffic lane in the western approaches to Los Angeles/Long Beach Harbors. The language of the subcommittee's recommendation is dated September 22<sup>nd</sup>. It is included with today's meeting materials and offered to the full committee for their consideration.

All that being said, the traffic separation scheme through the Santa Barbara Channel as shown on the NOAA and Admiralty charts remains the only IMO approved traffic separation scheme that is intended for vessels transiting through the western and northern approaches to and from the Los Angeles / Long Beach harbors. The Navigation Safety Subcommittee is not recommending that vessels should choose to transit south of the Channel Islands. The subcommittee is not making any recommendation whatsoever as to which route a mariner should choose to follow. That decision is for vessel owners and masters to make.

However, should a mariner choose to depart from the IMO approved traffic separation schemes and transit south of the Channel Islands, the subcommittee believes they should utilize these voluntary traffic lanes to the extent possible. It must be understood that:

- If adopted, these voluntary traffic lanes would not be an IMO approved traffic separation scheme, therefore COREGS Rule 10 would not apply to vessels while using the lanes.
- The US Navy conducts weapons testing in the areas south of the Santa Barbara Channel Islands. All mariners transiting south of the Channel Islands should make every effort to communicate in a timely manner and comply fully with any instructions they receive from the US Navy, even to the extent that such instructions would require them to depart from a voluntary traffic lane.
- Mariners who choose to transit south of the Channel Islands should expect and plan for possible delays and diversions during those times when the US Navy is conducting weapons tests.

Lastly, the Navigation Safety Subcommittee will endeavor to continue its cooperation to the extent possible with all federal and state agencies as they work to address any issues arising out of California's new fuel switching regulations and that fall outside the Harbor Safety Committee's sphere of influence, including, but not limited to their continued use of the Navigation Safety Subcommittee as a forum for further discussion.

Our next meeting is today at 1330 at the San Pedro Marine Exchange.